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U.S., IN RETALIATION, SUSPENDS FOOD AID TO THE MOZAMBICANS

MOVE TIED TO ENVOYS' OUSTER

**State Department Contends Cuban
Agents Were Responsible for
Action by African Nation**

By BERNARD GWERTZMAN

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, March 20 — The Reagan Administration said today that it had suspended its entire food assistance program to Mozambique in retaliation for the expulsion of four American diplomats two weeks ago. The wives of two of the envoys were also expelled.

Today's retaliatory move, one of the rare cases in which the United States has used the withholding of food as a diplomatic weapon, dramatized the Administration's decision to display firmness against Cuba and countries that solicit Cuban help.

When the African nation accused the Americans of working for the Central Intelligence Agency and expelled them, the State Department said Cuban intelligence agents had instigated the action. The aid, which involves assistance for the current fiscal year, consists of about \$5 million in sales of wheat and rice and a grant of 27,000 tons of corn.

Review of Relations Planned

"We have temporarily suspended food aid to Mozambique pending a complete review of our bilateral relations," William J. Dyess, a State Department spokesman, said. When asked whether food aid was now to be used more frequently by the United States as a tool of diplomatic pressure, he said, "When we are confronted with an incident such as in the recent past, the entire bilateral relationship comes under review."

Other officials said that the ability of the United States to retaliate diplomatically against Mozambique was limited because it has no embassy in Washington and receives no American assistance but the food aid.

The action against Mozambique came as the Administration's overall policy in southern Africa was under review and was being questioned on Capitol Hill in light of recent developments suggesting departures from the Carter Administration's policy.

Congress Is Asked to End Curb

But State Department and White House officials said that the basic outlines of American policy might not be significantly altered after the study.

Yesterday, in one of the moves suggesting a possible change in policy, the Administration announced a package of legislative requests that included repeal by Congress of the 1976 Clark Amendment, which bars covert assistance to anti-Government groups in Angola.

That law, known for its sponsor, former Senator Dick Clark, Democrat of Iowa, had been viewed by the Ford and Carter Administrations as an impediment to executive authority, but the Carter Administration did not seek its repeal because it was seeking cooperation with the Angolan Government.

Angola's help was needed in negotiations to gain the independence of South-West Africa from South Africa. Angolan officials had hinted that once South-West Africa became the independent country of Namibia and Angola no longer had to fear attacks from South Africa, it would seek the removal of most of the 20,000 Cuban troops in its country.

The United States has refused to establish diplomatic relations with Angola because of the Cuban influence there. The Carter Administration hoped that success in the Namibia negotiations would lead to normalizing relations with Angola.

As part of the Reagan Administration study, officials have to decide whether or not to change course in the Namibian negotiations, in which the United States, Britain, Canada, France and West Germany have been working with Nigeria and African nations neighboring Namibia to obtain the agreement of South Africa and the main guerrilla force, the South-West Africa People's Organization, on an independence formula.

Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig Jr., in appearances on Capitol Hill yesterday and Wednesday, said that the United States sought a peaceful, internationally approved solution to the Namibia problem. A senior White House aide said last night that he expected, once the study was completed, that the United States would remain in the five-power Western group and advocate renewed negotiations.

Nevertheless, the request to repeal the Clark Amendment suggested to African countries, including Angola, that the United States was considering the resumption of military cooperation with the anti-Government group in Angola known by its initials as Unita.

The leader of that organization, Jonas Savimbi, who visited Washington during the Carter Administration, is expected here soon but it is unclear what kind of reception he will receive.

Visit by South Africans

In addition, five senior South African military intelligence officers recently visited the United States on visas that the United States had issued without knowing they were military men, the State Department says. They met officials on Capitol Hill and were received by the National Security Council staff and the Defense Intelligence Agency.

The White House and the State Department insisted today that the request for repeal of the Clark Amendment did not mean anything more than that the Administration, during its "honeymoon" period with Congress, wanted to remove impediments to its freedom of action.

White House officials also said that at the request of the relevant Congressional committees, foreign aid authorization

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legislation would be submitted in the next few weeks and that it had been decided to request the repeal now.

Members of Congress pointed out that action on the proposed legislation routinely takes many months, giving time for negotiations on Namibia to resume. It is generally assumed here that South Africa will not be ready to discuss Namibia until after its elections at the end of next month.

This gives the Administration time to send fact-finding missions to Africa and to invite key African leaders to Washington. However, the Administration has said that the Prime Minister of South Africa would not be among them.

A Dissent on Issue of Cubans

Representative Howard Wolpe, Democrat of Michigan, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs subcommittee on Africa, said he did not want the Clark Amendment repealed except in the context of the establishment of diplomatic relations with Angola, removal of the Cuban troops and settlement of the Namibian dispute.

Otherwise, he warned, repeal of the amendment would cause Angola to rely

more heavily than ever on Cuban support, "so I think that the effort is totally counterproductive from the standpoint of America's strategic interests within southern Africa."

One thing that seems likely to change is the American attitude toward South Africa. The Carter Administration, with its emphasis on human rights, was perceived as being much more confrontational toward South Africa than the Reagan Administration is. Mr. Reagan has spoken of the need to have an open exchange with South Africa.

Mr. Haig, with his emphasis on strategic responses to the Soviet Union, is likely to look on South Africa as more of a Western "asset" than the Carter Administration did, State Department officials said. But he has said that he does not want to see Soviet influence increase among black African nations and that he sees a need for diplomatic solutions to African problems.

The Reagan Administration, for instance, has gone along with a \$75 million economic program for the Zimbabwe, formerly Rhodesia, the same amount the Carter Administration proposed.